



DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington, D.C. 20520

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR

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July 28, 1977

Dear Mr. Foster:

I want to express my appreciation for your thoughtful letter concerning how we might deal innovatively with the human plight of American prisoners in foreign jails.

With regard to your suggestion of human rights attaches', the Secretary of State recently directed Ambassadors in each country to concern themselves personally with human rights matters. They will undertake a series of new endeavors in the area of information gathering, communicating with host country governments on human rights matters and insuring substantial contact with the local human rights committees.

In regard to special training programs for consular officers and for the formation of surrogate families for prisoners among the United States communities abroad, I have learned from the Bureau of Security and Consular Affairs that a number of positive steps have been taken. The consular officers' course has been completely restructured while consultations and annual regional consular conferences include greater emphasis on this topic. The issuance last year of a handbook which, in addition to providing guidance on prisoners, also attempts to instill productive attitudes on the part of inexperienced or neophyte officers towards our protection responsibilities. It also calls for Foreign service posts to involve the American community as much as possible in providing assistance to Americans imprisoned abroad. In regard to prisoner life support and medical care for prisoners, I am pleased to report that the Department has sought and obtained authorization from the Congress for emergency medical assistance and dietary supplements for our prisoners abroad. This new

Mr. Donald M. Foster,
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program will get underway next month with a training conference for consular officers responsible for its implementation abroad to be held here in Washington. The Department of Justice which is primarily responsible for the implementation of our Treaties with Canada and Mexico on the exchange of penal sanctions is working on plans for the reintegration of exchanged prisoners into American society. Our recent discussions with the Justice Department officials involved have demonstrated that the concerns you have expressed regarding prisoner rehabilitation and reintegration are under active consideration. The treaty with Canada has received Senate ratification. We are hopeful that the Treaty with Mexico will also be approved. It is inevitable that such novel treaties will be tested constitutionally before the courts. We expect that they will survive such tests, at which time we will explore with other interested governments (including that of Bolivia) the feasibility of negotiating similar treaties with them.

Unfortunately, today's demands for consular services are beyond our present material and human resources, but the Department is seeking to rectify that situation as soon as possible. I am sure with public and Congressional support we will be able to manage these problems.

I do appreciate your taking the time to write on this subject.

Sincerely,

Patricia M. Derian
Patricia M. Derian
Coordinator for Human Rights
and Humanitarian Affairs

*I'll be in
Bolivia next Thurs. &
Fri - I hope to see
nearly everyone -*

July 28, 1977